



**Partners in Practice TA Collaboratives**  
*Our Equity Journey:*  
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction  
October 12, 2023



**TRANSCRIPTION**

**Dr. Kyser:**

Good afternoon to our regional partners in the eastern and central time zone. Good morning to our partners in the mountain time zone. Welcome. Welcome everyone. We're going to go ahead and get started. I want to officially welcome you to the Region III Equity Assistance Center, entitled the Midwest & Plains Equity Assistance Center's *Partnership in Practice Technical Assistance Collaborative* this afternoon and this morning. So, a deep welcome, thank you for being here.

**Dr. Kyser:**

For those that may be unaware, we're excited to launch the *Partnership in Practice Technical Assistance Collaborative*, or the *Partnership in Practice* for short, at the beginning of our second grant year. *Partners in Practice TA Collaboratives* are virtual equity network learning convenings that bring together both past and current partners, either at our pre-K through 12 at the LEA level, or at our state Agency level. It's an opportunity for partners to come together to plan, practice, and to deliver practical strategies responsive to urgent equity issues that they may be facing. So, we're very excited to have you all here today.

**Dr. Kyser:**

During this *Partners in Practice* event, our guest state education Agency, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, will discuss their equity journey, so very excited about that. They will also talk a little bit about how they've leveraged their partnership with, with us, the Region III Equity Assistance Center, and include key insights that

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strengthened their work and strategic approaches to more authentically advance equity-oriented systems change within their specific context. So again, welcome again.

**Dr. Kyser:**

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**Dr. Kyser:**

So, with that, again welcome. I am thrilled to serve as your host. My name is Tiffany Kyser, she/her. I serve as the Associate Director of Networks & Engagement for the MAP Center, and I'm joined by Kristina Johnson-Yates, which is one of our tremendous Graduate Research Assistants, who will be serving as technical assistance director. So, I'll give Kristina an opportunity to greet everyone.

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**Kristina Johnson-Yates:** Greetings. Again, my name is Kristina. This is my second year here at the School of Education here in Indianapolis, and I am happy to be joining you all today.

**Dr. Kyser:** Thank you, Kristina. If you have any issues, Kristina, again, is serving as co-facilitator and our technical director, so feel free to private chat Kristina if you need any support with troubleshooting. I also want to welcome Lisa P., who is our Captioner for today. Closed captioning has been enabled. Lastly, to learn more about the Midwest & Plains Equity Assistance Center, should you be new to us, Kristina is placing a link in the chat where you can engage a little bit more as you are listening to our opening remarks, receiving and engaging in our opening remarks, or may pin that and bookmark that for a later time.

**Dr. Kyser:** So, we are an organization who strives to make our experiences as accessible as possible. We would ask for the next 90 minutes that you make yourself comfortable. Move about as your body, mind, spirit needs, takes--take breaks as you need it. We will not have any formal breaks in this 90-minute session, but we, we certainly want to honor that you may be tending to different things participating either in your office, home, or in your community. Please note that alternative text is used on slide images should you be engaging a screen reader. We will not be engaging in any small breakout groups, but we do ask that you mute your mic when not speaking. We also ask should you feel comfortable and, and, and open to

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unmute your video so that we're able to engage and perceive you in different modalities.

**Dr. Kyser:**

Lastly, we want to welcome each of you. So, as you are entering the virtual space, we would ask that you rename yourselves as part of the welcome. You can see my naming convention as an example. You would just hover over your own image; you'll see three dots pop up on the upper right-hand side of your screen. You would click those three dots, or that ellipse, and choose "rename." And we would ask as part of your greeting and hellos to everyone, you would use your first name, last initial, preferred pronoun should you choose, and the state in which you're, you're coming to us today. So again, your first name, last initial, preferred pronouns, and the state with which you're coming to us today. So, I'll give you about 10 seconds. If you have any questions, feel free to chat Kristina, who's providing us our tech support. And again, my name is an example of how you might go about doing that. About five more seconds. Kristina has also placed those directions in the chat for those that want to engage the written guidance as well. About two more seconds. One second, okay. Wonderful.

**Dr. Kyser:**

I'm now thrilled and honored to welcome our guests for today. Three tremendous human beings and educational leaders from the state of Wisconsin, engaging with us around their journey at the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. We are joined today by Lynn Winn, Demetri Beekman, and Ananda Mirilli. And I am so thrilled to have

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him—have all of them here with us. I will now turn it over to these three individuals who will, who will lead us in a, in a discussion, a story, a narrative, an experience about their equity journey.

**Demetri Beekman:**

All right, so thank you, Dr. Kyser for inviting us, the Department of Public Instruction from Wisconsin, to be here today and to talk about our educational journey. And I am Demetri Beekman, the Executive Director for Equity and Inclusion with the Department of Public Instruction, and I am here with two amazing colleagues: Ananda Mirilli and Lynn Winn. So, I'll pass it over to Lynn.

**Lynn Winn:**

Thank you, Demetri. Hello everyone. I'm also extremely privileged to be here with you having this conversation today. My name is Lynn. I'm an Assistant Director on the Special Education Team here with the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, and I'm looking forward to our conversation. Ananda.

**Ananda Mirilli:**

Thank you so much. I wanted to just extend a deep gratitude to folks at the Great Lakes Equity Center for this opportunity to come to you all. I wanted to give a special shout-out to the people that are making this space accessible to everyone. Also, deep gratitude to the ancestors that are already in the space that have taught us, showed us the way, and that have carved the path that we are going to share with you all today. So deep gratitude, and I saw -- I'm seeing so many familiar faces so thank you all so much for, for joining us this morning.

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**Ananda Mirilli:**

Just a little bit about the identities that, that are informing the way we're going to navigate this space. Speaking for myself, I'm a Brazilian. I identify as an immigrant. I lived some of those years as undocumented. I identify as a Brown woman, queer educator, and proud single mom. And that proud is all the way to the top. Single parents have a really negative stereotypes in this country, and I'm working towards, along with other single parents, towards dismantling that. So, if you relate to any of those identities, welcome to the space. If you don't, thank you so much for being in solidarity with us, and I'll pass it back to you, Demetri.

**Demetri Beekman:**

Alright, thank you. And, you know, before we get into any of the intricate details of Wisconsin's equity journey, I think it's important to give you a little historical context of our state, and to just let you know that prior to 2001, there were many individuals committed to equity, including racial equity, within the Department of Public Instruction. And I, I know she's probably not going to like this, but Ananda and Lynn were instrumental in creating, and getting the equity conversation started at the Department. And we are here today...if it wasn't for those two, we would not be here today. And I'm glad they were able to have that relationship with the Great Lakes Equity Center, to be able to collaborate and partner.

**Demetri Beekman:**

But I also want to get back to examples on where we were. So, when the Wisconsin Constitution was adopted in 1848, it called for tuition-free schools open to all peoples, of all races and religious beliefs.

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And in 1949 it became illegal for a school board to exclude any pupil from public schools based on religion, nationality, Color, or race, or to maintain separate schools to achieve exclusion. This 1949 act was Wisconsin's initial Pupil Nondiscrimination Law. Since then, it's undergone numerous revisions since then, and as currently written activities or programs or be denied any benefits or treated in a different manner because of: sex, race, religion, national origin, including a student whose primary language is not English, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, parental status, marital status, sexual orientation, physical disability, mental disability, emotional disability, or learning disability.

**Demetri Beekman:**

Each school district is required to designate an employee of the school district to receive complaints regarding discrimination under Wisconsin's Pupil Nondiscrimination Law. The Law also requires each school district to submit an annual compliance report to the Department of Public Instruction, and periodically conduct a self-evaluation of the status of Pupil Nondiscrimination, and equality of educational opportunities. And in 1991, American Indian Studies in Wisconsin, often referred to as Wisconsin's Act 31, requires that all public school districts and pre-service education programs provide instruction on the history, culture, and Tribal Sovereignty of Wisconsin's 11 federally-recognized American Indian Nations and Tribal Communities, and we hold true to that.

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**Demetri Beekman:**

So, I just wanted to make sure that we had a little historical background on Wisconsin and where we are, and how we're going to continue to move forward with promoting educational equity for all. And now I would like to pass things over to Ananda, who has been instrumental, as I said before, and a catalyst for educational equity not only within DPI, but for our entire state. So, I'll pass it over to you, Ananda.

**Ananda Mirilli:**

[inaudible] Demetri. Thank you so much for the generous comments. We want to invite you all to learn more about our journey at the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. And we are sharing this journey through storytelling, and highlighting key events to model our leadership, but also to share some of our places of growth. And you know, in education, we say growth is that: we messed up, and then we learned, and then we came back again. And we are still in that, in that space of growth. But we wanted to share a little bit more about the challenges. So, if there's anything that makes, makes sense to you all, as far as what we're sharing with you all, please, you know, use that. Ask more questions. Reach out to us. If there is places that are like, "Hmm, no, this might not serve for us or for our state," no worries; it's all good.

**Ananda Mirilli:**

I also wanted to share that although there's a bookmark for 2001, our journey has not started--did not start in 2001. The Department has always had incredible employees, incredible leaders that predate this timeline. But we wanted to mark 2001 at the beginning of our

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storytelling journey, with the inception of the State Superintendent Affirmative Action Advisory Council. Kindly know, you know, if you're an educator, you know we're going to have those acronyms, so we, we use the acronym of SSAAAC. And through SSAAAC, the State Superintendent appointed a council focused on affirmative action for the Agency with a few purposes: one, to advise the state superintendent on equity, affirmative action, and workplace diversity; assist in developing programs, initiatives, activities, and training opportunities to raise awareness throughout the Agency and build our own internal capacity; communicate concerns and recommendation to Cabinet; and then model working and leading for, for equity within the Agency, and encouraging colleagues to do the same.

**Ananda Mirilli:**

One of the examples of a SSAAAC initiative that we wanted to highlight was the development and implementation of Perspectives in Equity Series. And that series was meant to increase DPI staff awareness and perspectives based on institutionally and historically marginalized identities. I wanted to say this with a lot of grace because at that time, this was our best thinking. You know, we have moved and evolved over time. The--this particular committee now it's called Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, JEDI, and it's comprised by members of the Department and many different, many different teams. Many different teams.

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**Ananda Mirilli:**

Next in our timeline is related to a special education policy. In 2004, the U.S. Congress re-authorized the federal special education law, the Individuals with Disability in Education Act, or IDEA. This was the first time Congress addressed the longstanding research related to racial disproportionality in special education, and required school districts and char-, and charter schools with racial disproportionality in special education identification, discipline, and/or placement to require districts to reserve funding to address racial disproportionality or racial disparities. Each state has navigated that policy differently. But they were all responsible for developing our own criteria for how to measure, how to measure racial disproportionality.

**Ananda Mirilli:**

In Wisconsin, we worked with the Harvard Civil Rights Project, and crafted a criteria that has been nationally recognized. Before implementing the criteria, the Department of Public Instruction recognized that school districts and charter schools needed technical assistance to navigate and to support to address racial disproportionality. And so, the Department invested approximately half a million dollars a year in supports. And one of those supports is - was called CREATE at that time, which is the project that I help lead with the network, and I'm here with one of my colleagues, Angie Balfe, who has, who has been with the, the project for many years as well.

**Ananda Mirilli:**

We worked also at that time with the National Disproportionality TA Center on requirements and guidance related to disproportionality.

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And then continued to work with the staff who started the MAP Center around 2007. So, this has been a longstand collaboration with the MAP Center. We had...since being collaboration with the MAP Center, or the Great Lakes Equity Center in the different ways, and the different evolutions of our work, and we'll highlight some of them throughout our time. Mostly the network and CREATE at that time, this is before pandemic of course, I know sometimes it's hard for us to remember that time. We were offering in-person opportunities, in-person learning opportunities, for district staff. Particular learning around race, and we partnered with Pacific Education Group, and the work of Glen Singleton around Courageous Conversations. And we also had a robust section of technical assistance support to our districts. I'll pass it to you, Lynn, for the next slide.

**Lynn Winn:**

Thank you, Ananda. The work of the...the disproportionality work group that Ananda referenced, and the work of CREATE, set a foundation, along with all of that history. If you wouldn't mind just going back a slide? Thank you. Set the foundation for the Agency equity work that, that was to follow. And, and began emerging more significantly under our then State Superintendent, Dr. Tony Evers. In 2010, Dr. Evers invited Glen Singleton, the founder of Courageous Conversations, to work with our staff through his framework for dialogue on race and racism. There were two outcomes from -- two significant outcomes, many outcomes, but two that we want to share with you a little bit today.

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**Lynn Winn:**

And one was the creation of a State Equity Leadership Team, or what we lovingly called SELT. The mission of SELT was to support DPI staff to address our Agency's institutional racism and its effects on the educational experiences of Wisconsin kids. And that was the first internal work group formally created through our executive leadership specifically to address race and racism within our institution. Dr. Evers was now the governor of Wisconsin, was our first State Superintendent willing to speak out publicly about the racial disparities in our educational system and put responsibility for fixing them on the adults in our system, rather than on our families and our learners. Having a high-level leader like Dr. Evers willing to speak on the disparities and hold us responsible for them was a really important step in much of the equity work that followed in our Agency.

**Lynn Winn:**

The second outcome that I want to talk about as a result of our work with Glen Singleton was the appointment that, that Dr. Evers made to the Promoting Excellence for All Task Force. This task force was made up of educators and educational leaders who, based on some data that, that was collected, was showing promise on addressing the opportunity gaps within their schools and districts, and Dr. Evers brought those folks together. And the report that was published was the strategies that those folks were using in their educational settings, intended to be replicated by others across the state.

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**Lynn Winn:**

In a, in a -- I'll share a little excerpt of an email that Dr. Evers sent to the staff back at that time. And it said, "In my state of education address today, I announced the release of the Promoting Excellence for All, a report from the State Superintendent's Task Force on Wisconsin's achievement gap, and DPI's Promoting Excellence for All website. As you know, Wisconsin has much to be proud of: high graduation rates, and high achievement on ACT. However, we also have the worst achievement gap in the country when we look at students of Color and their white peers." It was a very bold statement for a public official who was elected to make at the time. And we are grateful for his willingness to step forward.

**Lynn Winn:**

The...in 2014, was the year I joined the Department and I was very, very excited to contribute to the work that was underway. So that same year, a self-guided e-course was created to accompany the Promoting Excellence for All report that was then posted on our website. Unfortunately, it is no longer available on our website because the content has now become somewhat dated. But it was one of our Agency's first statewide efforts to, to provide support and professional development statewide, around equity and particularly racial equity.

**Lynn Winn:**

Another important event during this time was, was Dr. Evers hosting the first all-staff Agency gathering around educational equity. So, it brought all of our employees, about 600 of us, together in one space. And the, the primary purpose of that was to support a consistent

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message that educational equity will continue to be a focus and a priority for our Agency. Now, the, the points-in-time that I've been describing in our journey generated a tremendous amount of positive energy. It generated hope within our Agency culture for making a, a lasting impact on the disparities that we had created.

**Lynn Winn:**

My experience in the years that have followed is that while that energy and hope were growing, there was still a lack of understanding in how to translate that energy into the systems and structures that would be needed to translate the talk into the walk. So, for example, Ananda referenced the Perspectives in Equity Series that was launched in 2016 by SSAAC, now, now referred to as JEDI, which I love. That...the goal of that was to bring the voices and experience of people with identities that we we're marginalizing in our educational system, into our Agency. And so that looked like providing monthly opportunities for our Agency staff to gather, to bring the lived experience of people with a variety of identities into our...to our staff to learn from them.

**Lynn Winn:**

And I was, I was very much involved in helping to organize some of those learning opportunities, and as I look back, while they were well-intentioned, they also represented a, a socially constructed proxy for us not having very many people of Color, or people with diverse identities, employed in our Agency. And so, that was a bit of an evolution for me and for us. Perspectives on Equity does continue as Ananda mentioned. It's, it's offered a little less frequency in

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content, and the opportunities for learning are outstanding. And still, seven years later, we have a very small percentage of people of Color employed in our Agency compared to the racial demographics of our state. So, while important work has occurred throughout our state on our equity journey, it has not been the clear articulated path that our slides might suggest. There have, in fact, been multiple paths; some occurring in, in entire isolation of one another, and some focused on intent without consideration for impact or unintended consequences. Next slide, thank you.

**Lynn Winn:**

Another important example that, that highlights the relationship with the Great Lakes Equity Center. SELT was created in 2010 as I indicated, and in 2016, it was still, it was still in place and very active and passionate, and was seeking ways, by 2016, to move from raising awareness around race and racism in our Agency, to actually beginning to shifting the mindsets of our Agency staff toward educational equity leadership. And one of the things SELT identified as a, as a starting point was a desire to establish what the baseline of understanding of race and racism was amongst our Agency staff.

**Lynn Winn:**

And so, to do that, and with approval of our executive leadership, we partnered with the Great Lakes Equity Center to create a *Racial Equity Readiness Survey* that we could administer to all of the staff during that 2015-2016 academic year. The survey was intended to establish a baseline of understanding around six key areas: race and racism, power and privilege, racialized attitudes and dispositions,

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racialized behaviors and actions—as well as the impacts of race and racism, and ways we might redress racism in our Agency. It was made up of true/false and multiple-choice questions.

**Lynn Winn:**

And I'm focusing a little bit on this because it was an amazing survey. I'll, I'll give you just a couple of examples of the kind of questions. So, for example: True/false - all white people—economically, legally, and socially—benefit in some way from racism. That was one of the questions. Another one was: A white child is selecting a picture book from the classroom library. In nearly every book, the characters look like her and her family. This is an example of – Acculturation, white privilege, stereotyping, or microaggression. And there were also questions related to the lived experience of our staff, such as: How frequently do you estimate that you have experienced institutional racism and/or bias in your current organization? Never, rarely, occasionally, frequently.

**Lynn Winn:**

The, the questions were provocative. They were powerful. And we were very excited to, to gather this information from our staff. However, after reviewing the actual survey questions, our Agency leadership declined to administer it to the staff, and at that time it was due to concerns about the political impact of the results being shared as a public record, and how those might be leveraged in ways that they were not intended. For me, this, this represented one of the first that I experienced a clear boundary or limitation around the equity work that we were pursuing. SELT wanted to go deeper

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into institutional racism within our Agency that our leadership at the time was willing to follow.

**Lynn Winn:**

As an alternative, what our Agency leadership did do was directed the development of *Embracing Equity*. It was our first Agency-wide equity-driven professional development. The intent was to establish sort of a floor of fluency across all of our Agency staff around specific topics. Those initial ones were: color blindness, implicit bias, and microaggression. So, over the course of about a year and a half, in 2016, the content was developed and 26 amazing people from across the state were brought together and trained to facilitate it. And then during the six months...first six months of 2017, all of our Agency staff, about 600 people, participated in this half-day learning in teams numbering anywhere from 6 to 20 people.

**Lynn Winn:**

It was, it was a very significant under taking, and other than the onboarding that we provided to all of our Agency staff, it was the only professional learning at the time that all of our Agency staff were required to attend. And then after all of that initial implementation of that, then anybody hired new to our Agency participated in that learning as part of their onboarding. This initial effort has evolved into what we now refer to as *Equity Onboarding* that Ananda leads for our Agency, and it has evolved in the most amazing ways that she'll talk about in a little while.

**Lynn Winn:**

One last thing in this particular period of time that's also important, is that during that same period, our model to inform culturally responsive practice was being developed by the Wisconsin Response to Intervention Center. The RTI Center was an organization that DPI funded, and its, its purpose was to provide statewide support for implementation of multi-level systems of support. The model to inform provided professional development on what it...an actual...articulated a pathway for becoming an educational equity leader. That effort was led by Andreal Davis, who at that time was the statewide coordinator for culturally responsive practice at the RTI Center. And it became the foundational statewide professional development for educators and educational leaders on equity.

**Lynn Winn:**

So, while we were trying to work on building the capacity of our internal staff, we were also working on providing access to high quality professional development, at low or no cost, statewide to educators around educational equity. Meanwhile, the racial diversity of our Agency employees was still far less than the diversity of our state population. And, at that time, most of our equity work was being done primarily by a group of about 20-25 people here in the Agency, across the Agency, connected primarily by their passion for the work. So much being done, and still in the absence of the systems and structures necessary to make it impactful and sustainable over time.

**Lynn Winn:**

Forwarding to 2017. In 2016, Dr. Evers served as the President of the Council of Chief State School Officers, another acronym, CCSSO. It's a national organization for state leaders of education. And under his leadership in 2017, CCSSO published its organizational definition of equity, and here's what it read: "Educational equity means that every student has access to the resources and educational rigor they need at the right moment in their education despite race, gender, ethnicity, language, disability, family background, or family income." So the folks within our Agency who were leading equity efforts at the time lifted up concern to our executive leadership around two things, primarily: one was the use of the word "despite" in the definition, as that word connotes that whatever follows that word is a barrier; and that by identifying some of the, of the identities that folks have, but not all of them, might suggest that those not listed are of somehow less significance.

**Lynn Winn:**

So, lifting these up to our leadership actually resulted in a revision to the CCO definition, and I'll read it, I'll read you the new one. It is: "Educational equity means that every student has access to the resources and educational rigor they need at the right moment in their education, across race, gender, ethnicity, language, disability sexual orientation, family background, and/or family income." So, the word "despite" was changed to "across," and sexual orientation was added to the list of identities included in the definition. All in all, a partial victory.

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**Partners in Practice TA Collaboratives**  
*Our Equity Journey:*  
*Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction*  
October 12, 2023



**Lynn Winn:**

Sorry, I lost my place here for just a moment. Ok. So, as I move to turn the conversation back over to Ananda, an important aspect of what I've shared regarding the equity journey so far is, is that the majority of the milestones that have occurred are distinct bodies of work. Again, many of which were done in isolation of one another, and by a relatively small number of people within our Agency. Prior to and since Dr. Evers' bold stance on racial equity in education, we, we were talking consistently across the Agency about the importance of advancing educational equity and doing a lot of work to center equity in our educational efforts. Though still as individual people, and individual teams, and even in individual divisions within the Agency, and still in the absence of that infrastructure to support being able to lead for educational equity as a state.

**Lynn Winn:**

As Ananda referenced, the MAP Center has bore witness to the entirety of this journey with us. They have...we have entered into numerous memorandums of understanding with the, the Center over the years, and they have navigated the starts and stops, the two steps forward and one step back that occurs in leadership transitions that we've had over the years, and always, always with a deep respect for the realities that we are experiencing in our state and as critical friends, willing to speak the truth in constructively provocative ways as we have made our way through this journey. And we're forever indebted to the MAP Center for the partnership that they have shown with us. And with that, I will pass it back to Ananda.

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**Partners in Practice TA Collaboratives**  
*Our Equity Journey:*  
*Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction*  
October 12, 2023



**Ananda Mirilli:**

Yeah, I wanted to lift up Lynn's comment in appreciation to, to the Great Lakes Equity Center. We wouldn't be here today if it wasn't for their patience with us. I wanted to speak to two other bookmarks in our timeline. One was a memorandum of understanding with Lac Du Flambeau Band of the Lake Superior Chippewa. The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction recognized the sovereign...the sovereign authority of each of the 11 federally-recognized Native American Nations in Wisconsin. And the importance of collaboration and partnership through formal government to government relationships, helping to ensure that Wisconsin American Indian students, Native American students, have the resources they need to become college and career ready, and at the same time ensuring that our educators are having the professional learning that they need in order to make sure that they're giving factual history to K-12 students.

**Ananda Mirilli:**

Since then, the MOUs, with five more of the 11 federally-recognized Native American Nations in Wisconsin, have also been put into place. The commitments in the agreements articulate meetings, and consultations, communications, cultural awareness, training for DPI staff, and specific support such as access to educational data, future development and recruitment, and access to library service. This process is not always perfect, but it is hard-wired into our department operations. Early in the chat, I highlighted the work of our colleague, David O'Connor, who leads the American Indian Studies. He also offers ongoing professional learnings, book studies. They are

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incredible and always updating to the latest information around what is it like lead as an educator in 2023, with deep awareness of our Indigenous roots.

**Ananda Mirilli:**

The next timeline mark that we wanted to lift up is the *Equity Decision and Policy Tool*. And this was around the time that I started the Agency with the early planning of that tool. And so, I was able to sort of see firsthand what was like to have that leadership by what Lynn shared, the small number of folks relentless, wanting to lift—like, like those, those book marks on the timeline cannot describe the amount of work of a small group of people in many different levels of our organization, to ensure that this, this bodies of work were implemented, institutionalized at the Agency, at the department.

**Ananda Mirilli:**

So, this work was led by Latoya Holiday, who was at that time the Special Assistant to the State Superintendent, Caroline Stanford Taylor, and Courtney Reed Jenkins, who is the Assistant Director for the Special Education Team. They led this work, along with folks from different parts of the, the Department as well. And they designed to integrate explicit...the tool's designed to integrate explicit considerations on equity, and decisions related to policies, practices, programs, and budgets. I'm just going to highlight a few of the purposes of the tool is to support staff in having equity-focused conversations, eliminate inequities and advance equity, and then identify who was positively or negatively affected by decision or



implementation. And examine potential unintended consequences of our decisions.

**Ananda Mirilli:**

It's used widely promoted, but optional. So did not become a part of the overall way of working in the Agency as it was hoped. So, there are different leaders in the Agency, different departments that consistently use the tool, but that is not used throughout the Agency, I want to say yet. Right, Demetri? Yet. Demetri is the person that's always bringing that positive to our, to our conversation. I'll put the link to the tool later on, unless Demetri, you have it right away.

**Ananda Mirilli:**

And I want to move us to 2019. So, as Lynn mentioned in 2018 the Agency recognized the need to update the...our onboarding structure, onboarding curriculum called *Embracing Equity*, to review the dated language and also, like, you know so much has shifted, and we had evolved our language terminology, our thinking, so we partnered with a local nonprofit organization to purchase a curriculum aligned to the current organization vision. The YWC Madison shared their slides, their content, facilitator guide and resources that were then used to support facilitation skilled trainings, and this new version of equity onboarding.

**Ananda Mirilli:**

Those sessions, the entire curriculum—then, ok, so now we're talking 2018-2019 implementation, so this is pre-pandemic. So, post-pandemic, it looks like eight hours virtual learning experience, that centers in race and identity, a system of racial inequities, implicit

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biases and microaggression, and an opportunity for a deep dive into the equity and policy tool, and then moving our theory to, into practice based on our colleagues' own place in organization, position in the organization. In 2019, there was a, a, a group of directors that came together to support the leadership of women of Color in the Agency. And I want to pass to Lynn, to talk a little be more about how was is like, how was it coming together to support the equity initiatives. And what was it like to navigate the energy in the Agency at that time.

**Lynn Winn:**

The equity director's group formed out of necessity, really. There was no structure at the time that supported middle management—assistant directors and directors within the Agency together, other than our monthly meetings with our executive leadership, which was focused on priority, agency, and partnership. And so the, this group of 10 or so directors and assistant directors out of the 45 that are in the Agency, began to convene informally to have conversations about our Agency's equity efforts.

**Lynn Winn:**

The idea was, it was grassroots. And it was a way to have potentially a greater impact on some of the educational equity initiatives, it was meant to provide a little bit more of a collective voice from middle management to our executive leadership in the absence of that, that structure existing already. So, the focus of the group at the time was to lift equity-related thoughts, ideas, and concerns to our executive leadership. And one contribution of this group is a, is a letter that was

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submitted to our Cabinet in 2020 that we'll talk about shortly. But it was truly just a group of like-minded folks coming together to see if we could inform and improve our journey around educational equity within the Agency.

**Ananda Mirilli:**

Thank you so much, Lynn. So, by the end of 2019, so you see, like, how our timeline is, is, is getting shorter, so much happening that year. By the end of that year, our governor, Tony Evers, who was a former state superintendent for the Department of Public Instruction, signed an executive order that mandated all state agencies, all state departments, to create an equity and inclusion plan. I happened to reach out right away to some of the legislators that supported this executive order and wanting to know, like, like, how was it like to, to, to have energy in signing this, this, this important piece of legislation in 2019. And what is y'all's vision? And one of the things that was really interesting is that everyone was really excited about the, the signing of the order.

**Ananda Mirilli:**

One of the things that we realized at the Department is that it was so few guidance. And so, different state agencies were in their own journey around equity and inclusion and had to figure it out what's their own criteria. So, Demetri's going to talk a little bit more about that. Because part of the, the signing of this order really gave energy for us to say, "We need to create an, an officer that is really dedicating, that's their time dedicating," Because until that time, and still today to a certain degree, all of the efforts that Lynn has

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mentioned to you all, and I have mentioned to you all, has been mostly, like, volunteers, right.

**Ananda Mirilli:**

So, my job is not to lead the—I was not hired to lead the equity onboarding in the Agency, I'm not situated in the HR team, right. But I was staffed into because Lynn and I were doing some work together and saw our potential to, you know, update our language and create something much more responsive to the Agency, so we just did it, right? We just would be creating our own projects, we would be creating our own charge, and then move on that charge. And then, you know, requesting authorization along the way. And sometimes really pushing the Agency to be the Agency that we want it to be, right? And so, we're going to move into the 2020s.

**Ananda Mirilli:**

And what is really exciting about the early 2020s is to talk about the Women of Color Employee Resource Group. And, so much of this has to do with my own personal story, so I'm going to take a moment to actually get really deep and personal here. Prior to working at the Department of Public Instruction, I was at Madison School District working in the central office. And as I was...as a woman of Color, as a Brown woman, I got to the district and could count in one hand how many other people of Color I was seeing. And very few women of Color. And so, I just took it upon myself to, to just walk up to, to people that looked like me, and dark-skinned women, and say, like, “Hey, I just started here. Do you want to go out to lunch?” And then we formed, what we kind of, we named, “The Woke Lunch Group.”

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**Ananda Mirilli:**

And so, we started with five, there were five of us. We identified racially different from each other. But we would have weekly lunches. We would just walk out of central office and then go to lunch, and then we had a group chat; we were checking in with each other and supporting each other. And what I noticed is that out of the five, at the end of my term in Madison, there were only three folks left. And when I left, there were only two other women of Color that were still from the very first group. So, when I started at the Agency six years ago, I did the same thing. I walked around and looked for women that looked like me. Black, Brown, Indigenous women. And said, like, “Hey, I just started in the Agency. Do you want to go to...do you want to go out to lunch sometime?”

**Ananda Mirilli:**

And then we started the DPI version of The Women of Color Lunch, and it was mostly like a social group. We just got to know each other, where we’d been before, how long we been in the Agency, what is were our bodies of work. We talked about our families. We talked about what it was like to work in government. So, it was really, I want to say like sort of this support group but served also for me as an onboarding to the Agency. And then I began seeing, very similarly, right, women that we started out having lunches, they would be leaving. And then other women would be coming, and, and then, like, we’re having this group just sort of doing this movement. Sometimes would have, like, five and six, seven women going to lunch—and then sometimes it would be, like, only three, because people were

leaving, and people were, you know, struggling in the Agency and what not.

**Ananda Mirilli:**

So, this was really a grassroots leadership. And I know Lynn already used this language, and I think it's an important point to say so much of this was grassroots, right. People not in formal hierarchal leadership structure moving the Agency, creating bodies of work, and pushing the Agency to be a better Agency for, for everyone in Wisconsin. So, there was a moment in our very informal lunches and after work gatherings, that one of our colleagues, Bianca Williams Griffin, asked if, if that's all we're going to do, be doing? And I asked, like, "What do you mean?"

**Ananda Mirilli:**

"Are we, are we just going to have lunch and just do this informal, because I wanted to know, because I'm ready to do some action." And I was like, "Oh, okay. Well, I think we need to be doing something." And so, I said yes, and other colleagues did too. And we formalized an advocacy group. And we began having conversations with Cabinet around what, what would look like to institutionalize an employee resource group. So, we did research; Latoya Holiday was instrumental. She's a Black woman educator, she was instrumental in supporting our work and supporting our request. And in 2020, we institutionalized the first ERG, Employee Resource Group, for women of Color in the Agency.

**Ananda Mirilli:**

The...there are three main charters for us. One is to build a culture that fosters belonging and inclusion for women of Color at the Department. Two, advocate for resources and accountability to interrupt the continued marginalization of students of Color. And three, to support the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Cabinet, and leadership as it relates to addressing micromessaging, microaggressions, and improving conditions of employees of Color at DPI. See, we had the micromessaging language because at that time that was all we could get away. We now are very sharp in at least using microaggressions. Along with our work, it was important to also build solidarity with our white colleagues. Most, most of our white colleagues, as Lynn mentioned, were held, held leadership positions at the Department were white, and mostly white women, I want to say led. So, I wanted to pass it to you to talk about, like, you know, your journey, and building the solidarity among the directors and also building solidarity with the Women of Color group.

**Lynn Winn:**

Not only was the Women of Color ERG the first Women of Color ERG, it was literally the first Employee Resource Group formally recognized within our Agency. It is a huge accomplishment and a testament to Ananda and the group's tenacity and willingness to just keep going. Keep going. So meanwhile, our, our, our little grassroots equity director's group was continuing to meet. And as the, as the Women of Color ERG was seeking formal recognition, we sort of saw that as an opportunity to shift our focus toward advocacy, number one, to lift up some, some voice of leadership within the

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Agency to say, “Yes, please formalize this Employee Resource Group.” And then to advocate on behalf of the recommendations that the group was beginning to generate and lift up to our, to our leadership.

**Lynn Winn:**

As this was going on, and I will, I will share just a little story as well, in June of 2020, and you know at that point things had pretty much shut down due to the pandemic. But the Agency was in the process of publishing guidance for this date to support the return to school after the state-wide shut down that started in March of that year. And one of the directors in our group was charged with leading that, the development of that guidance. And they gathered input from interested parties across the state with a particular focus on input from people of Color. And when the draft of that was sent to our Agency leadership for review, much of the voice of the people of Color and the strategy specific to supporting learners of Color in that return to school were, were edited out of the document.

**Lynn Winn:**

Well, this came to the attention of our group on a Friday afternoon and the, the publication was to be released on Monday, the following Monday. And so, over the course of that weekend, this group met in various configurations throughout the weekend, and what ultimately happened, with a, with a result of that, that energy that occurred that weekend, was a letter to Cabinet that is linked in the slide deck, and it represented at the time probably one of the most direct assertions from middle management to executive leadership at that time. And if

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you take the time to read the letter, I think you'll, you'll understand the reason for me saying that.

**Lynn Winn:**

What followed that, that letter to Cabinet was a wide range of reactions. Anywhere from, "Yes, let's do this," to kind of, like, "Who do you think you are, exactly, doing this?" And, and some was from our executive leadership and others were from other directors, some of whom were concerned at not having been a part of the group, others who wish they could have signed the letter but weren't asked. Others who were asked to sign the letter, but didn't cocreate it, so weren't comfortable doing so. So, there's just a wide range. But the, the, the point being is that...there...when the dust settled, there was movement by executive leadership on some of the items in the letter, and some there was no movement.

**Lynn Winn:**

But what it did do on the shoulders of this Women of Color emerging ERG group, was there was a sufficient disruption in the organizational structure through that combination of things, that it began to bring about some new and different conversations about what we were and weren't doing related to the walk and the talk on advancing educational equity for learners of Color, and the need for our organization to generate that infrastructure to support us in getting from where we were to where we needed to be. Back to you, Ananda. Thanks for letting me share.

**Ananda Mirilli:**

It's taking me all the way back, Lynn, now. Those, those moments, y'all, it was no joke. We were, we were working. We, we were connecting. We were, we were on fire. And we really wanted to change. And we really wanted to inform our leadership, like, why we were, also needed to change. It wasn't just for us; it was for everybody that coming after and was for our students and families that were experience very drastic experiences during the pandemic.

**Ananda Mirilli:**

I think one thing that I wanted to say about...and, just lifting up the importance of this multi-racial solidarity work that formed in the Agency, even though, again, we, there were only very few numbers of people, or a small percentage compared to the 650 employees we have in the Agency, we were able to really move a lot of bodies of work and do a lot of things. And one of the things that, that was also happening in 2020 as a result of the executive order was the Agency, like many departments, had to create a group that was in charge of the creation of the Equity and Inclusion Plan. And Demetri is going to talk more about the plan, but what's important to say in 2020, is that it was the advocacy of the Women of Color, along with the solidarity of the directors and assistant directors, that we were able to have that group, have the leadership of the Black women.

**Ananda Mirilli:**

So, we asked firstly, kindly, that group to be led by Latoya Holiday, and that members of the Women of Color ERG to be part of that group as well. Because not only we wanted to make sure that there was representation in that group, but we wanted to make sure that it

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was representation of people that actually had the lived experience, and they're actually doing the work around racial equity in Wisconsin in their own, in their own role. At the end of that year, for us, for our work, with the professional learning offerings for the state, we were also trying to define what would, what would, what was that, what would that look like in 2020, right, in the world of, of Zoom and virtual experiences. So, we pivoted to the in-person experiences to virtual opportunities throughout the state. We also created this open access. We no longer charged anyone to attend.

**Ananda Mirilli:**

And the, the former CREATE and Disproportionality Technical Assistance Network then evolved into the Educational Equity Network. And we were beginning offering opportunities as a webinar series. And at that time, because of all the uncertainties with funding, and shifting in funding due to COVID, we were asked to do just like, let's just do one year of a webinar series--similar to what you all are experiencing today. And we were hoping that maybe like 40-50 people would show up, and maybe like our close friends would show up and...we'll be ok. We'll be ok. But then our second session, we had 400 and some people registering, and I'm looking at Angie here because, you know, we were like, "What are we going to do?" Because that means that, you know, you have this really high demand when we were not expecting. And we're still learning how to do Zoom, we're still learning how to do recording. Remember that time, y'all? Like we, we were, we were there. And then now we're having to hold space for, like, 400 people.

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**Ananda Mirilli:**

So, the, the webinars evolved into now we offer four yearly institutes, and there's one coming up. I'm going to do like a shameless plug in here in the chat. We have now about 1200, close to 1200 people registered. For some reason I wasn't able to copy and paste, so I'm going to do that again. And in the, the evolution of the institute, follow...follow the evolution of the Agency too, so we began having conversations about race and identity. And now we're centering and asking presenters to really talk through what does it look like to create and foster and sustain educational belonging for themselves as educators, whatever their identities are. And to other people that are in those learning spaces. Whatever their identities are. And really focusing on the professional learning aspects of it. So, what does it look like to create a learning community that is intentional, that's inspiring, that people don't have to be mandated.

**Ananda Mirilli:**

So, this is...no one is mandated to attend. You know, we're just...it's all invitation, and people are just keep coming back. And joining us. So, I put the link in the chat. It's free to anyone. Please sign up. We have many different states joining us. We have different countries that...educators from different countries that are also joining us. And we really excited about this work. And I think that we navigated the space of the balance between external-facing equity work that we do, the external push back, which every time people wanted to talk to me about that, I show the heat map of our latest report that shows that pretty much every corner of our state is represented in our learning opportunities. We have a high number of educators of Color

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also attending, which means that this is also relevant to everyone. And the demand is always there, and every year we have been growing. So, you know, we rely on the support of Lynn, and Demetri, and others in the Agency to continue to support our work. So, with that, I want to pass to Demetri to walk us through the equity and inclusion plan, and the creation of your office that was something that we--it was so much embedded in our vision, so Demetri, I'll pass it to you.

**Demetri Beekman:**

Thank you, Ananda, for that. And yes. I just want to say thank you, again. I'm grateful for the work that the Women of Color group has done, because I don't think without their perseverance or their tenacity, that I'd be sitting in this seat or in the role that I'm currently in, based on what they have contributed to the Department of Public Instruction. So, I just want to say thank you from the, from the bottom of my heart. It truly is a testament to what individuals who are passionate about certain things, especially when it comes to equity and inclusion, can accomplish much.

**Demetri Beekman:**

So, what's the E & I Plan? Based on the executive order from Governor Tony Evers relating to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and it requires agencies to create an Agency-wide equity and inclusion plan. And within that plan, the goal is to increase diversity. And I'm sure that many of you, of us educators know, "Hey, we need a diverse workforce." And that's something that we at the Department are looking forward to. So, we're all working toward the same goals.

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Also, to promote equity, and inclusion, and to cultivate a sense of belonging. Every E & I Plan must address three focus areas of recruitment, retention, and culture. And the plans are evaluated over a three-year period by the Bureau of Equity and Inclusion, also known as BEI. With action steps, progress monitoring tools, timelines to make sure that we are meeting the, the expected goals of the plan.

**Demetri Beekman:**

How did this, this plan come to, into fruition within DPI? As Ananda and Lynn said, through volunteers. Within DPI we have various subcommittees focusing on equity and inclusion that take part of the process to share their insights, make recommendations, give feedback to the Plan. We also have a monitoring system that shares with the Agency, on our intranet, the progress of the Plan. The work is a continuous process and daily conversations are taking place to work towards creating the most inclusive and welcoming work environment possible at the DPI. These individuals work at least 5-6 additional hours on top of what their regular PDs are, are prescribing. That's how much dedication and passion that they have for our Equity and Inclusion Plan that we have just come up on the completion of year two, our 2024 through 2026 plan. And it took some courageous conversation, but we were able to get there.

**Demetri Beekman:**

Moving on to our Partnership for Equitable Practices. And this was a team formed to address the issues, again, of a lack of diversity in the Agency's managers and the use of the *Equity Decision and Policy*

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*Tool.* And I just want to reiterate the *Equity Decision and Policy Tool* is a tool to help all DPI members to make decisions with equity at the forefront and consider our most marginalized and underrepresented groups. And, and I know moving forward with this plan, we are going to make more of a concentrated effort to make sure that this tool is a part of every decision. Some...there are pockets within DPI who are using it, but I think it needs to be a consistent part of our foundation and structure as it comes to making decisions.

**Demetri Beekman:**

Next, we have our Culture and Climate Survey. In February 2022, the Culture and Climate Survey work group consulted with three state agencies, and the Midwest & Plains Equity Assistance, MAP Center, to design the Agency's first ever survey to evaluate culture and climate. This is 2022, and this is the first year, but hey, good things come to those who wait. So, now we are in a position to, you know, find out what's going on within DPI. In June of 2022, the Culture and Climate Survey was administered and there were 561 respondents, 183 that came from our, our schools for the blind and visually impaired and the deaf and hard-of-hearing, and then 378 from our WEOP, Wisconsin Educational Opportunities Programs, GEF 3 in Madison. We also held three open office hour sessions to answer questions. We really wanted to be transparent with the data instead of just collecting the data and not doing anything with it. So, we had those sessions take place.

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**Demetri Beekman:**

In August of 2022, WCER, which is the Wisconsin Collaborative for Educational Research with our Culture and Climate work group, we facilitated seven sessions with the focus groups to co-interpretate the data and make recommendations aligned with action steps and measures of success. Now, the initial goal was to, to have this done in, in three focus groups, and I think Ananda can attest after the first session it was like, “We're not going to accomplish anything that we want to in just one session.” So, we had to...we had to understand and meet the people where they were with their feelings, because you can't argue how someone feels about how they're being treated. So, we added an additional four listening sessions, and I think that made a, a really big impact on the trust and the relationship between leadership within DPI, and the rest of our colleagues.

**Demetri Beekman:**

In January of 2023, the Culture and Climate Survey was updated, the website, and there's a dashboard for transparency. It holds a two-part engagement session with stakeholders with exec Cabinet directors, and everyone that is a part of the schools as well. Let's see here. Yes, and now we can go to the next slide. Yes. This is where we are now, 2022, August 1st, man, 2022, I began serving in the current role. Over the past year, I've learned a lot about the culture and climate of, of DPI. I learned that structures and systems of how equity is being infused throughout the Agency and with our external partners, able to collaborate with Agency leaders to create an equity focused infrastructure that will be sustainable and consistent. No matter who's in this role, no matter if Lynn or Ananda or I leave, we

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want to make sure that we are leaving a system and structure that can continue regardless of who's a part of that process.

**Demetri Beekman:**

I was able to meet with each of the directors and the system directors to build relationships and find out how I can better serve them in their current roles, and to really, again, you know build their relationships and understand what each of their divisions were a part of. Began partnering with the JEDI Team, our Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Team, formally known as SSAAAC. And, and really, JEDI oversees our equity and inclusion plan. So, they're the ones to have monthly meetings to share out how the subcommittees are, are working, to find out how things are going. To be solutionists. To be problem-solvers and collaborators. To make sure that this, this plan is coming to fruition within the three-year period.

**Demetri Beekman:**

During this, this one-year time, we were able to create Agency core values: love, integrity, humility, belonging, and honor. Those are our five core values, and being the State Agency, we have to model and lead by example. So, through those core values, those are the things that we expect to see in every classroom, in every school, throughout Wisconsin. We also focus on our community agreements as Ananda alluded to. I'm, I'm working with the statewide DEI directors throughout the state of Wisconsin to help close the, the opportunity gap as we call it. Because with the results from, from our test scores that just came out, we are making improvements, we are

closing the gap, but there still is a significant gap with our Black and Brown students compared to our white students.

**Demetri Beekman:**

Moving onto our LGBTQ+ Employee Resource Group, the Women of Color paved the way for, for their LBGTQ+ ERG. You know, they were a small group of, of folks working on a few LGBTQ+ issues including student records, name change, gender marker, et cetera, as well as advocating for an LBGTQ position, and eventually, an ERG. Then the small group got more focused on just the ERG idea. The Women of Color was already formed and then, you know, they started thinking about it; they said, “Hey, we, we need to do that.” So, the group met, you know, a few months and finally broke the proposal for SSAAAC, and it was approved. And on the LGBTQ+ ERG, there are allies, and I want to point out this, because this is really important, that the genesis of the group included advocacy on the part of allies who were concerned about family members who were...who identified as LBGTQ+. So, it just wasn’t an internal thing going on, but it was also an external benefit as well.

**Demetri Beekman:**

And within the, the year, it took some time, but the, the equity and inclusion team is starting to expand. We created an equity and inclusion leadership committee with various leaders of subcommittees who are focusing on equity and inclusion. We meet weekly to talk about how to make sure that the actions that were identified in the equity and inclusion plan are coming to life and are a part of our culture. Molly Herman is on special assignment to support

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our LGBTQ+ students, and focusing on the disparities with our marginalized students throughout the state of Wisconsin. She's responsible for safe schools and sending out badges, and that has been really well received by our LGBTQ+ students and educators.

**Demetri Beekman:**

Finally hired an Equity and Inclusion Specialist, Carlos Pérez-Espitia, to work on many of the equity and inclusion initiatives that we have, both internally and externally, and we're looking to continue the future collaboration with the MAP Center as we continue to grow our plan out, and, again, with our Wisconsin Educational Equity Coalition. And, and this, again, directors of equity throughout the state of Wisconsin, creating a playbook for other districts who may not be as far along as our equity--on their equity journeys as others, but we really want to be a, a resource, a one-stop shop for people to call and come to for assistance and advice, to problem solve things as it relates to equity and inclusion throughout the state.

**Demetri Beekman:**

So, this is, is where we are right now. I've been here a little over a year, but it feels like more than that, feels like four or five years because of the, the necessity and the necessary things that are taking place within our internal place, but also what's most important for our students, who are the most important people here. So, this concludes our presentation, and I think now we're going to open it up if anyone would like to have any questions or...I forgot about that. Intercultural Development Inventory. This...yes. This is probably the most, one of the most important pieces that I almost forgot to

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mention. So, the Intercultural Development Inventory is a cultural self-awareness assessment that focuses on where you are culturally. There are five different orientations: are you in denial where you don't see Color? Are you in polarization where you judge differences? Or are you in reversal where you think other cultures are more--have a better way of doing things than your own culture? Or are you in minimization where you don't see Color? You know, back in the day, the, the, the focus was, "We need to be colorblind. We need to treat everybody the same." That has shifted.

**Demetri Beekman:**

Now we need to be Color-conscience and let people know that we see who they are. So, when we move from minimization, we move to acceptance, because now we're able to see the commonalities and differences, but really only focusing on, you know, the commonalities. But when we get to adaptation, now you're being... you're, you're able to be that peacemaker. You are able to bridge the gap between various cultures where you may not even be a part of that specific culture. So that is what the Cabinet has experienced, the EILC members have gone through this, through this process. You'll take a 15-to-20-minute online assessment. You'll get where you think you are, your perceived orientation, and then you'll get your developmental orientation—and this is where you actually are.

**Demetri Beekman:**

So then, we work to figure out how do we close the gap between your perceived and your developmental? 98% of individuals who take the assessment have a gap. But really the individualized

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development plan is on you. How much do you really want to improve in your intercultural competency journey? And that's what DPI is working towards. Because otherwise, if we don't understand our blind spots, some of the stereotypes and things that we have had in the past, we're just going to regurgitate those same things over and over when we create policies, when we write different rules and expectations, select different curriculums. If we're not focusing on being open-minded and having that intercultural competency background, our most marginalized and underrepresented students will continue to be left out and not be at the forefront in order to close that opportunity gap.

**Demetri Beekman:**

So, I would advise, if you haven't had information on the IDI, I can definitely share that with you, because it has made a difference within our Cabinet and our EILC team. Because we talk about culture and climate, and race and ethnicity, we talk about this every day of our lives when we're meeting. So, with that, now if you have any questions, and I want to bring in Ananda and Lynn, and if there's anything that I may have missed or forgot to mention, please, please share.

**Dr. Kyser:**

And I'm scanning the virtual space, but feel free to unmute your microphones and share out. We've got plenty of time before we take a group photo and close. Kristina and I will close us out here. So, feel free to review your notes, process. Want to give you some time to process, and feel free to unmute and share out when ready.

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**Demetri Beekman:** It's good to see some familiar faces. Leon, Jon from MPS. Good to see all of you. Angie, good to see you again.

**Kristina Johnson-Yates:** I'm curious to know, what type of work do you all do? Ananda, I know you mentioned having groups for women of Color. Do you all do any intergroup work around the different dynamics amongst race between different identities? You know Latinx women, Black women, Asian identified women, so on and so forth?

**Ananda Mirilli:** Kristina, that's a beautiful question that made me think about another question that we had. But I'll address your...what came up for me right away. The number of people of Color in the Agency is very significant small. And so, although there is some -- so I'm, I'm going to say, I don't have any other Latina peer that I meet, like, regularly. We hired, I think last year, the only other Latina that I'm, I'm, I'm part of and colleague...the identification has made it a little challenging with working from...working remote, right? As I shared in the story, I used to just walk around the building or an elevator and just inviting people. So now unless we are signed to work with each other, we don't really see, so I only have...there's only one, another, one other Latina that works close to me, and we are...we're colleagues, we're peers, and we connect.

**Ananda Mirilli:** I think there is...there's a lot more Black women than...than the other racial groups. So, they at times, you know, connect for different things, but institutionally, that is the...that is the structure that we

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have. And so, we have representation of Hmong women, Latine/Latinx women, and a large number of Black women and Afro Latina women in our group. We also have men in our group, or anyone identify any, any other ways. So, the, the, the centering of the women of Color was because we realized experience of the women of...of women-identified individuals, or employees in the Agency was deferred from men, even men of Color, that shows up...showed up on our climate culture survey that Demetri shared with us. And what I...and then some of us also are in the LBGT group as well. So, the LGBTQ ERG. But yeah, I, I know there's other states that are very sharp on their multiple groups that they have. We don't have that, the number of people to even form additional groups. But that's a great question. Thank you.

**Dr. Kyser:**

Thank you, Ananda. We have time for a question more before we move to our photos. Again, just give some process time. Feel free to unmute your mics.

**Demetri Beekman:**

But to follow up with Kristina's question, we are looking to expand our Employee Resource Groups, not to just the, the women of Color, LBGTQ+, but I know there's been some focus on leaders of Color, those that are veterans, those who are introverts. We're really going to be an equitable and inclusive work environment, we have to open that up. So, JEDI is revising the protocols for the ERG to make sure that we are the most inclusive workplace possible. So, hopefully we'll get more, you know, Employee Resource Groups formed within DPI,

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even if it is a small number, but I think there is a space for, for everybody.

**Dr. Kyser:**

Thank you, Demetri.

**Dr. Kyser:**

Deep gratitude and appreciation to Lynn, Demetri, and Ananda for that comprehensive, so well-prepared, transparent, real, authentic conversation around the nuances of holding multiple identities, negotiating positionalities, and being a part of a large system. Constantly provoking, calling colleagues in, stimulating productive and healthy and loving tensions, all towards the goal in realizing a more safe and inclusive and just educational space for students in Wisconsin.

**Dr. Kyser:**

I can tell you as a former middle school student and administrator that that sort of story, there are a lot of highlights that I'm going to hold onto and think about in my own practice. There are a lot of considerations in terms of the work of the MAP Center, and how we can continue to support and center the work that's happening, so thank you, thank you very much. This has been wonderful to, to just learn and, and take in what you all have shared. As we move to close, we want to provide you all a reminder to stop by our website. We have culled some resources that we felt might be a wonderful compliment to Ananda and Lynn and Demetri's share.

**Dr. Kyser:**

So, with that, on behalf of AQ, Kristina, and myself on the MAP Center team side, a deep, deep gratitude. And I want to hold the last moment of space for Ananda, Demetri, and Lynn if there's any closing thoughts that you all have or that you want to share as we wrap up today. I want to hold the last minute for you all.

**Ananda Mirrilli:**

Just gratitude.

**Lynn Winn:**

Gratitude for the space, gratitude for the time. Ananda.

**Ananda Mirrilli:**

Yeah, thanks Lynn. Same. And also, we're going to make sure that all the links work, so you can open all the links. And then, just know that we are a public organization, so if you want the curriculum, if you want the survey, if you want any resource, it's, you know...we, we want to democratize the learning that we have done, and please reach out to us and we'll send it to you, whatever you want. And I'll pass it to you, Demetri.

**Demetri Beekman:**

Thank you, Yeah. I just want to give gratitude and thanks to, to the Equity Center, thank you, Dr. Kyser for, for entrusting us to present our story. And as Ananda said, we are here to support, we are here to help, and we want to share everything that we have gone through and, and...so you don't have to go through the bumps and lumps that we've gone through, but we want to be thought partners with you along your journey, so we are here to support and advocate for you in any way, shape, or capacity that we can.

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**Partners in Practice TA Collaboratives**  
*Our Equity Journey:*  
*Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction*  
October 12, 2023



**Dr. Kyser:** Thank you all for being here. Please enjoy the rest of your day, the rest of your week. Until next time. Bye-bye, everyone.

**Center Announcer:** The contents of this resource were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education (S004D220003). However, the content does not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and endorsement by the Federal Government should not be assumed.

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Finally, the Midwest & Plains Equity Assistance Center would like to thank the Indiana University School of Education Indianapolis at IUPUI, as well as Executive Director Dr. Kathleen King Thorius, Director of Operations Dr. Seena Skelton, and Associate Director Dr. Tiffany Kyser, for their leadership and guidance in the development of all tools and resources to support the region.

[End of Audio]

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